

REPORT ON BIRD RINGING IN EAST AFRICA FOR 1966-1967

By

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INTRODUCTION

Earlier reports in this Journal have covered the period from 1960, when ringing started, to 30th June, 1966 (Blencowe, 1960 and 1962; Smart, 1966). The present report covers the year 1st July, 1966, to 30th June, 1967, except that certain local birds which were ringed in July 1966 (and were included by Smart, *loc. cit.*) are not counted in this year's totals.

It will be seen from the tables which follow that the present year was outstandingly good for ringing. John Smart, who left Kenya in April 1966, was responsible for much of the enthusiasm which made these results possible. His services will be greatly missed.

The year was also marked by the first recovery of an East African-ringed bird found outside East Africa.

The nomenclature used follows Vaurie for the Palaearctic birds and Mackworth-Præd & Grant for the African species.

TABLE I

BIRDS RINGED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY RINGING ORGANIZATION

a. Palaearctic Migrants

	1966/67	Grand Total
Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i> L.	1	1
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> L.	3	4
Mongolian Sand Plover <i>C. mongolus</i> Pallas	0	1
Great Sand Plover <i>C. leschenaultii</i> Lesson	1	2
Little Stint <i>Caldris minuta</i> (Leisler)	117	239
Temminck's Stint <i>C. temminckii</i> (Leisler)	1	1
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i> Pontoppidan	22	23
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> (L.)	116	154
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> (Bechstein)	48	57
Greenshank <i>T. nebularia</i> (Gunnerus)	0	1
Wood Sandpiper <i>T. glareola</i> L.	4	12
Common Sandpiper <i>T. hypoleucos</i> L.	4	8
Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i> (L.)	505	728
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i> L.	332	563
Red-rumped Swallow <i>H. daurica</i> L. *	1	1
House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i> (L.)	0	1
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i> L.	69	69
Red-throated Pipit <i>A. cervinus</i> (Pallas)	11	11
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i> L.	2,965	3,687

Grey Wagtail <i>M. cinerea</i> Tunstall	0	1
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i> L. †	21	26
Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> (L.)	1	1
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i> (L.)	115	128
Marsh Warbler <i>A. palustris</i> (Bechstein)	2	2
Reed Warbler <i>A. scirpaceus</i> (Herman)	115	119
Great Reed Warbler <i>A. arundinaceus</i> (L.) (<i>arundinaceus</i> & <i>zarudnyi</i>)	8	11
Basra Reed Warbler <i>A. a. griseldis</i> (Hartlaub)	2	2
Upcher's Warbler <i>Hippolais languida</i> (Hemprich & Ehrenberg)	0	2
Olivaceous Warbler <i>H. pallida</i> (Hemprich & Ehrenberg)	3	7
Barred Warbler <i>Sylvia nisoria</i> (Bechstein)	2	2
Garden Warbler <i>S. borin</i> (Boddaert)	118	141
Blackcap <i>S. atricapilla</i> (L.)	11	19
Whitethroat <i>S. communis</i> Latham	4	6
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> (L.)	83	89
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i> (Pallas)	1	2
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> (L.)	13	13
Wheatear <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> (L.)	0	3
Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oe. isabellina</i> (Temminck)	0	1
Rock Thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i> (L.)	1	2
Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> Brehm	2	2
Sprosser <i>L. luscinia</i> (L.)	1	4
TOTALS	4,703	6,146

NOTES

* This bird was probably *not* a Palaearctic migrant

† Twenty birds were probably *L. c. collurio* or *L. c. kobylini*. The other bird was *L. c. phoeniceoides* (Schal.) or *L. c. isabellinus* Hemp. & Ehr.

b. African Birds

No list is given for this year as only one or two birds were ringed apart from those recorded by Smart in last year's totals. The grand total ringed stands at 960.

TABLE II

LIST OF RECOVERIES OF BIRDS RINGED IN EAST AFRICA
(This list refers to birds recovered during the 1966-1967 ringing year)

Key to symbols and terms

RING NUMBER: Where this is in italics the ring has been returned.

AGE: f.g. — full grown, age uncertain.
ad. — adult, at least one year old.

SEX: ♂ — male.
♀ — female.

MANNER OF RECOVERY:
+ — shot or killed by man.
× — found dead or dying.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* Gmelin.

D.0503 Ringing details never supplied by ringer.

+ (shot) 16.1.67. East side of Lake Naivasha, Kenya 0°45'S. 36°25'E.

J.G.

Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> L.		
B. 0700 f.g. ♀ 3.3.67 Lake Nakuru, Kenya 0°22'S. 36°05'E.		DJP
×(dead) 19.3.67 where ringed.		
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i> L.		
J. 3809 f.g. ♀ 14.1.67 Eastleigh Sewage Works, Nairobi, Kenya 1°16'S. 36°52'E.		GCB
+ (shot) 30.4.67 near Doha, Qatar, Persian Gulf c. 25°30'N. 52°E.		
Yellow-bellied Greenbul <i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i> Smith		
A. 0720 f.g. ♀ 27.9.62 Manyara National Park, Tanganyika 3°35'S. 35°50'E.		AMM-D
+ (shot) 27.2.67 where ringed.		
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i> L.		
J. 2666 ad. ♀ 15.10.66 Eastleigh Sewage Works, Nairobi, Kenya		JBS
×(sick, died later) 16.10.66. Aquinas High School, Eastleigh area.		
The above records constitute the only recoveries during the year.		

TABLE III

BIRDS RINGED IN EAST AFRICA AND RETRAPPED IN 1966-1967 YEAR

Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	
J. 006 24.9.61 Eastleigh Sewage Works, Nairobi, retrapped 15.10.66 where ringed (♀)	
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	
J. 1419 23.3.66 Gala, Uganda, 1°18'N. 31°49'E. retrapped 14.1.67 where ringed	
J. 1426 31.3.66 Gala, Uganda, retrapped 18.12.66 where ringed, retrapped 6.4.67 where ringed	
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	
J. 1405 18.3.66 Gala, Uganda, retrapped 25.2.67 where ringed	
J. 1432 5.4.66 Gala, Uganda, retrapped 5.2.67 where ringed, retrapped 25.2.67 where ringed	
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	
J. 1401 18.3.66 Gala, Uganda, retrapped 25.2.67 where ringed	
J. 1408 19.3.66 Gala, Uganda, retrapped 22.3.67 where ringed	

SOME NOTES ON RINGING IN EAST AFRICA

Only five ringers were operating in the whole of East Africa during the year. D. J. Pearson, based in Kampala, ringed over 1,700 birds mainly in Uganda but also a fair number at Lake Nakuru, Kenya. Besides most of the waders ringed in the year, Pearson also accounted for all the Whinchats and most of the warblers. D. J. M. Caffyn, working at Thika, caught good numbers of Yellow Wagtails and Swallows. E. D. Steel started ringing Yellow Wagtails in Nairobi towards the end of the season.

J. B. Smart and the writer worked together for much of the time, often with help from Society members. Eastleigh and Kariobangi Sewage Works, both on the eastern outskirts of Nairobi, were visited regularly from 24th September, 1966, until 9th April, 1967; Yellow Wagtails were caught in large numbers but numbers of other species were low. At Kabete, some eight miles north-west of Nairobi, over 650 Yellow Wagtails were caught. The birds were roosting in napier grass, *Pennisetum purpureum* Schumacher, over twenty feet high, but before going to roost they would gather around a certain herd of Hereford cattle some distance from the roost. The method employed was to flush the first arrivals away from the cattle into an adjoining cattle-free field where nets had been put up. Later arrivals would then settle in the "netting" field. Most of the birds would be sitting preening, a few would be feeding and generally the birds were fairly tame. When the time was considered ripe, the birds would be walked up towards the nets, the wagtails would fly or walk in the desired direction; then, when the ringers and helpers were about seventy yards from the nets, they would charge, and normally *some* birds would be caught. Providing that the net was not full of weavers or widow birds, it was usually possible to do more than one drive before the light failed. Sixty-nine Tree Pipits were also ringed at Kabete, most were caught in long grass in which they roosted.

Of the 659 Yellow Wagtails ringed at Kabete only one was retrapped there and none were retrapped elsewhere; a Thika Yellow Wagtail was retrapped at Eastleigh but no birds ringed at Eastleigh or Kariobangi were retrapped away from the place of ringing. The populations of wagtails at the different ringing sites were of considerably different sub-specific composition; at Eastleigh, Kariobangi and Thika most birds were *M.f. lutea*; at Kabete, *flava* was the commonest race, with small numbers of *lutea*, a few *thunbergi*, a *beema* and several resembling *cinereocapilla*. The Gala and Entebbe birds were mostly *flava* and *thunbergi*. Further quantitative work is planned on the racial composition of these different populations, also it is hoped that ringing will shed some light on the confused question as to whether or not the British race, *flavissima*, really does reach East Africa. It should be noted that racial identification is restricted to males.

The trapping of hirundines has not been possible on a large scale, mainly because no large roosts have been found. The ringing of warblers and small thrushes has only been worth while in Uganda; as recorded by Smart (1966) no satisfactory method or site has been found in Kenya for trapping reasonable numbers of these birds. Wader ringing at Lake Nakuru, Kenya, was shown to have good possibilities, and work is continuing at this site.

Once again the writer would like to appeal to any ringers or potential ringers to contact him to help in the Ringing Programme. Ringing does cost money but it is interesting to note that ring prices are lower than in Britain, and nets, pliers and balances cost the same as in Britain, plus postage.

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